UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION V

≤: JUN 2 5 1986

JBJECT: Confirmation of Verbal Approval and Ceiling Increase Request for A-Chem
Site, Chicago, Illinois - ACTION MEMORANDUM

FROM: Stephen M. Browning, On-Scene Coordinator
Western Response Unit

TO: Valdas V. Adamkus
Regional Administrator

THRU: Basil G. Constantelos, Director
Waste Management Division

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memorandum is to confirm the verbal approval given on
June 9, 1986, to expend up to $64,000 to remove and dispose of hazardous
chemicals and drums, and to request for your concurrence to expend an ad-
ditional $99,000 for this immediate removal action. This ceiling increase
is necessary because additional drums and bulk chemicals were discovered
after the debris was removed, and most of the debris was discovered to be
contaminated with hazardous chemicals.

BACKGROUND

A-Chem Corporation was a facility that blended custom chemicals for the
electroplating industry. Chemicals handled by the facility included var-
ious types of acids, cyanides, and bases. A-Chem Corporation is located
in a residential area at 1322 N. Western Avenue, Chicago, Il.

A fire on January 26, 1986, destroyed the facility. During the fire, a
number of drums were punctured when the roof caved in. A great deal of
fire water, contaminated with hexavalent chromium, ran off the site into
surrounding alleys and streets and froze. The United States Environmental
Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) initiated an emergency removal action to
mitigate the run-off of acids, and to restrict site access. This removal
action was successfully completed within a few days. A copy of the action
memorandum is attached.

On June 10, 1986, the U.S. EPA initiated another emergency removal action
at the A-Chem facility due to another fire at the facility and off-site
migration problems.

The total number of drums in the building was estimated to be 45. After
the removal of the debris from the building, over 60 additional drums and
large quantities of bulk chemicals and contaminated debris were discovered.

THREAT

The A-Chem site in Chicago, Illinois constituted a threat to human health and welfare and met the criteria set forth in paragraph 300.65 of the National Contingency Plan for immediate removal. The main threats at this facility are: direct contact by human to strong acids and strong bases; the potential of HCN releases in a residential area; and the potential of reactions between strong acids and strong bases.

ENFORCEMENT

The facility owner and operator have been identified as responsible parties. Verbal notifications were issued to the operator on January 27, and the owner on June 10, 1986. The operator took limited action to secure the site on January 27, 1986, but the owner declined to take any action on June 10, 1986. The operator died during the interim between the two incidents. An administrative order is being prepared.

PROPOSED PROJECT AND COSTS

The objectives of this removal action are: contain the off-site migration of strong acids and strong bases, remove and dispose of the drums, bulk chemicals and the contaminated debris on the site.

Estimated Cost

	Verbal Approval 6/10/86	Ceiling Increase Request	Total Project Costs
Contractor	$ 50,000	$ 70,000	$130,000
15% Contingency	-0-	$ 10,000	$ 10,000
TAT	$ 10,000	$ 4,000	$ 16,000
EPA	$ 4,000	$ 2,000	$ 7,000
Subtotal	$ 64,000	$ 86,000	$165,000
15% other loss	-0-	$ 13,000	$ 25,000
TOTAL	$ 64,000	$ 99,000	$190,000

RECOMMENDATION

The conditions at the A-Chem site in Chicago, IL, met the requirements of the National Contingency Plan for immediate removal, therefore I recommend your confirmation of the verbal approval and you approve the ceiling increase request. The total estimated project costs are $190,000, of which $142,000 are for extramural cleanup contractor costs. You may indicate your approval or disapproval by signing below.

APPROVE: _____ DATE: _6/25/86_
              REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

DISAPPROVE: _____ DATE: _____
              REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR